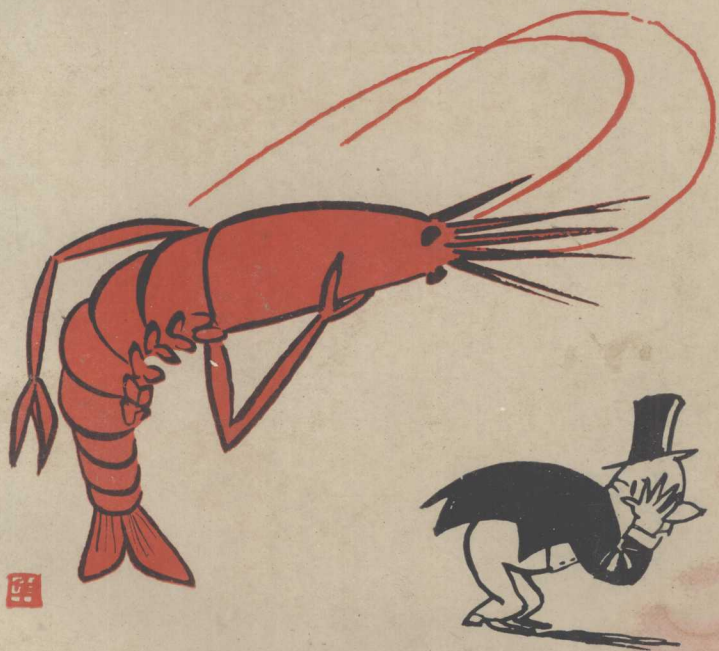


YUAN SHUI-PO

Soy Sauce and Prawns

SATIRIC POLITICAL VERSE



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A Word from the Editor

These poems have been chosen mostly from *Ballads of Ma Fan-to* and *Spring Orioles* (People's Literature Publishing House) and *Paeans and Curses* (Writers' Publishing House). A number of them — such as *For the Sake of the Fascists' Health*, *Arrogant Villains*, *Their Creed*, *An American Hat on His Head*, and *What's the Answer?* — first appeared in progressive newspapers and periodicals during the reactionary rule of Chiang Kai-shek.

Yuan Shui-po — who before Liberation wrote under the pen name "Ma Fan-to" — and his satirical poems are famed throughout China. In the dark forties his *Ballads of Ma Fan-to* reflected the hatred of the Chinese people for imperialism and the Kuomintang reactionaries, and inspired them to action. Verses from these poems appeared on banners carried in anti-hunger and anti-civil-war demonstrations, and were the basis for living-newspaper plays staged by progressive theatrical companies. They were an integral part of the contemporary struggle.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Yuan Shui-po, continuing his role as a political analyst in verse, has been placing particular emphasis on world affairs.

For the past twenty years his sharply pointed rhymes have been rapid timely comments on the domestic and international scene. While mercilessly flaying the rotten and corrupt, Yuan has only the warmest praise for the vitally new.

Because his poems, written in a clear pungent style derived from traditional Chinese folk literature, fervently express the emotions and aspirations of the people, they are extremely popular.

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FOR THE SAKE OF THE FASCISTS' HEALTH

News item: December 1943. Herbert Morrison, Britain's Secretary of State for Home Affairs, has ordered the release from prison of Oswald Mosley, leader of England's fascist party, "for the sake of his health".

It's like saying:
If wolves chase us,
Throw them our babies.

It's like saying:
If a robber's purse is empty,
Give him a pistol.

It's like saying:
If a murderer's hands itch,
Open the prison door and set him free.

Ridiculous, of course,
Who would be so insane?
Yet some have done just that.

Herbert Morrison
Released Mosley,
For the sake of this fascist leader's health.

Italian planes and guns,
Slaughtered barefooted Ethiopians,
For the sake of Mussolini's health.

In a Munich banquet hall,
Chamberlain "fed" Hitler all he demanded
For the sake of the Fuehrer's health.

Millions of youths pounded to bloody bits,
Europe, democracy, locked in concentration camps,
All for the sake of the fascists' health.

You're so solicitous
About their health,
You wine them and dine them
Plump and fat,
While everywhere the people
Long for their death.

Well, just because
They are still healthy,
Just because
They're not all dead yet,
We're going to unite, shout,
Wipe them out.

Only when
They're healthy no longer,
Only when
We've rid the world of fascists,
Only then
Will we stop.

PUSSY CAT

December 1945

Fire hoses, swords,
 Marked the warlord era;
Artillery, rifles,
 Chiang does it better;
Towards Chinese students
 A wolf's ferocity,
Towards foreign bosses
 Feline docility;
Boot-licking pussy,
 Eyes that adore,
"Money, please, money,
 More, more, more."

ARROGANT VILLAINS

News item: 1946. Although World War II has ended, America continues to station thousands of troops in China. Washington has supplied billions of dollars worth of arms to the Kuomintang reactionaries who are using them against the Chinese people.

Arrogant villains,
U.S. soldiers,
Rioters, rapists,
Murderers.

In our capital
Your fists swing freely,
On our battlefields
Your guns fire wildly.

We want peace,
You impose civil war;
We want democracy,
You bring colonialism.

Down with the new imperialism!
Down with the new militarism!
Down with the new fascism!
Down with Hitler's successors!

The Chinese and American people
All make the same demand:

Get out of China,
Yanks go home!

THEIR CREED

1946. A barb against the reactionary philosophy of the Kuomintang ruling clique.

"Only we believe,
Only we venerate:
Everything old, ancient, antique,
All that is static.

"New equals wicked,
Future means finis;
We've terrible doubts of our sons' tomorrow,
We dare not think of our grandsons' day.

"Only we believe,
Only we venerate:
Stagnation — our pleasantest state,
The grave — ultimate in safety,
Paralysis — our best legality,
Retreat — utmost normality,
Slavery — our highest ideal;
Only we believe
That only we are right."

AN AMERICAN HAT ON HIS HEAD

1946

An American hat on his head,
American clothes he wears,
In American shoes he's shod,
In American slang he swears.

At night in his fondest dreams
He becomes an American,
Though with the morning sun,
He's "just a Chinese" again.

American words in his ears,
His heart by America claimed,
An American gun in his hand,
At his own countrymen aimed.

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

1947

What's the answer?
Make it clear,
Life is cheap,
Food is dear.

The people's blood
They're sucking dry,
The Big Four Families¹
Are riding high.

By tens of millions
Die we must,
Fields become battle-grounds,
Men become dust.

Students are beaten,
Salesclerks serve time,
"Buy Chinese"?
You're committing a crime.²

¹ Chiang Kai-shek, T. V. Soong, H. H. Kung and the Chen brothers, leaders of China's ruling clique.

² When workers, students and youth staged big demonstrations in Shanghai against hunger, against the civil war, and for the right to maintain their own organizations, they were attacked by Kuomintang agents. Shop clerks who supported a mass movement in favour of

They unleash the flood
Of torrents cruel,¹
To the flames of disaster
They only add fuel.

Swaggering officials
Thrive on war,
The suffering people
Can stand no more.

There's only one answer,
It's clarion bright:
From our bed of pain
Rise up and fight.

domestic merchandise and against the American goods being dumped on the Chinese market were also assaulted by Kuomintang thugs. Several clerks were arrested, and some were killed.

¹ The Kuomintang broke the Yellow River dykes and flooded vast tracts of Liberated Area farmland.

A CALL TO ARMS

1949

Mass unemployment,
What to do?
Recruiting stations,
"Uncle Sam Needs You;"
Join up John,
Join up Jack,
Steady pay,
A nice soft sack.

Uniforms for
Overalls exchange,
This tommy gun
Has a lethal range;
Slaughter the "reds"
In every land,
Against all patriots
Take a ruthless stand.

Land reform in China?
Korean liberty?
Dangers to American
Security;

More bread in socialist countries?

Nations without strife?

Threats to America's

"Way of Life."

So join up John,

Join up Jack,

A veteran's bonus

When you come back;

There's plenty of booze

And the girls are free,

Long live the American

Century.

TWO BLOWS

News item: January 1951. While U.S. forces were suffering a crushing defeat at Pyongyang, an international conference in Warsaw unanimously condemned America for starting the war in Korea.

From the west a punch,
From the east a sock,
Their eyes grow dim,
They stagger and rock.

The western blow,
A resounding smack,
Knocked the UN disguise
Right off their back;
Destroyers of world peace
Used to be
Disciples of Hitler,
The *blitzkrieg* nazi;
Today, as at Nuremberg,
Gallows stand in wait,
Truman's gangsters
Will meet the same fate.

The eastern blow,
A terrific splat,